

M Hawaii MARINE

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APRIL 14, 2006



MEDCAP
A-3



Skate Park
B-1



Championship
C-1



AGUILAR

Hawaii-based Marine dies in flash flood

MCBH PAO
Press Release

Corporal Andres Aguilar Jr., 21, of Victoria, Texas, died April 2 when the 7-ton truck in which he was riding rolled over in a flash flood near Al Asad, Iraq.

Aguilar was a communications technician with Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, here.

Aguilar joined the Marine Corps June 2002 and reported to Hawaii March 2003. He deployed to Iraq March 2006. He also deployed to Afghanistan with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment from November 2004 to June 2005.

His awards include the Good Conduct Medal, Navy Unit Commendation, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and two Sea Service Deployment ribbons.

Aguilar is survived by his father, mother and brother.



Cpl. Jonathan Agg

Greg Medina, reflects on his son's life and death. Medina, a mechanical inspector at the National Museum of the Marine Corps, joined the project after his son, Lance Cpl. Brian Medina, was killed in Iraq in 2004.

Father's labor labor of love

Cpl. Jonathan Agg
Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. — Greg Medina awoke in the early morning hours of Nov. 12, 2004, with an intense, shooting pain in his side. Clutching the ache, Medina was unable to cry out; he could hardly breathe. After several agonizing minutes the pain subsided, but was replaced with a haunting sense that he had lost his son, Lance Cpl. Brian Medina, an infantryman then serving with B Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, in Fallujah, Iraq.

Medina went to his job as usual that morning at the construction site of the new Social Security Administration building in

See LABOR, A-6



1st Lt. Carl DeSantis

A Lava Dog with the Distributed Operations Platoon, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, peers down into the Pech River Valley while on a mission high in the mountains near Camp Blessing in Nangalam, Afghanistan.

1/3 provides first DO platoon in combat

Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondent

NANGALAM, Afghanistan — Lava Dogs serving in the Distributed Operations Platoon with 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, are making history by providing the first such platoon ever sent to a combat zone during their current deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Distributed Operations is an evolving concept created by the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory in Quantico, Va., that, according to "A Concept for Distributed Operations" statement released by the MCWFL last year, "describes an operating approach that will create an advantage over an adversary through the deliberate use of separation and coordinated, interdependent, tactical actions enabled by increased access to functional support, as well as by enhanced combat capabilities at the small-unit level."

"The essence of this concept lies in the capacity for coordinated action by dispersed units, throughout the breadth and depth of the battlespace, ordered and connected within an operational design focused on a common aim."

According the Gunnery Sgt. Jack Scheaffer, a project officer with the MCWFL who is currently serving with the Distributed Operations Platoon at 1/3's forward operating base at Camp Blessing in Nangalam, "The DO concept isn't as

complicated as it might sound."

First Lt. Carl DeSantis, platoon commander, Distributed Operations Platoon, 1/3, said he couldn't agree more.

"Distributed Operations is a new concept the Marine Corps is testing under guidance from the commandant to be able to cover more battlespace with less personnel by increasing the training and the small-unit level and the communications package," said DeSantis, a native of Reno, Nev., by way of Folsom, Calif. "Basically it gives a platoon the training, ability and gear to cover an area that a company would normally cover."

"It really just comes down to brilliance in the basics," added Scheaffer, a Vietnam veteran who joined the Marine Corps in 1968. "I think there were a lot of misconceptions as to what the DO project was in the beginning. Initially, everybody looked upon it and said sarcastically, 'Oohh, trying to train up a secret squirrel outfit, are you?' and things of that nature. All DO really is, is just emphasizing the basics of training and giving people the best training and the best gear that we can possibly give them."

The Distributed Operations Platoon got plenty of that training during a four-month pre-deployment training evolution at Fort Hunter Liggett in Jolon, Calif., before deploying to Afghanistan in January.

"When we first got to Fort Hunter Liggett, we started from scratch, literally," said Staff Sgt. Robert Lytle, infantry platoon sergeant,

Distributed Operations Platoon, 1/3. "We went back to the recruit training method," admitted the former drill instructor.

After their arduous four-month training regime, which included courses in both day and night tactics, techniques, procedures, patrols, communications, ambushes, land navigation, marksmanship, indirect and direct fire, fire and maneuver, convoy operations, weapons technologies and a plethora of other skills, the Distributed Operations Platoon was deemed ready to deploy to combat as the first ever platoon of its type.

"I think the battalion commander put the DO Platoon in the best place he could have possibly put them by sending us to Camp Blessing," said Scheaffer, a native of Richfield, Pa. "Not to take anything away from any of the other FOBs (forward operating bases), but this seems to be kind of the end of the line in Afghanistan. There is a lot of enemy activity out here. We are out here in Indian country and I think it is an excellent place for the DO Platoon."

According to Lytle, the Distributed Operations Platoon concept is one that he believes will eventually become a mainstay in the Marine Corps

"We know the whole world is watching us, to see if this DO concept will work," said Lytle, a native of Asheville, N.C. "We take that personally. We want to prove that DO is more than just

See DO, A-6

K-Bay shows its appreciation for all Key Volunteers

Lance Cpl. Ryan Trevino
Combat Correspondent

More than 175 members of the Key Volunteer Network, supporting the various units here, were honored by Marine Corps Family Team Building for their contributions during a ceremony held at Pop Warner Field, Friday.

The network of volunteers serves as a primary communication link between unit commanding officers and unit families, and enhances mission readiness.

"The Key Volunteer Network is so important, because the Marines' families need to be taken care of, and the KVs (Key Volunteers) do that," said 1st Lt. Eve A. Baker, director, Marine Corps Family Team Building, the Marine Corps Community Services parent program of the KV Network. MCFTB provides educational resources and services to foster personal growth and enhance the readiness

See KEY, A-7



Lynn Cuthrell (left), beneficiary education representative, TriWest; and Karl Kiyokawa, Hawaii market vice president, TriWest; present Marine Corps Base Hawaii Commanding General Brig. Gen. Steven A. Hummer with a check for \$5,000 during the Key Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony, Friday. There are more than 175 trained Key Volunteers on K-Bay.

Lance Cpl. Ryan Trevino

NEWS BRIEFS

Pride Day is a Day for Everyone to Lend a Hand

Due to the holiday weekend, Pride Day began one day earlier than planned. However, Marines, Sailors, and civilian Marines are encouraged to join forces again today to rid the base of trash and debris.

This year, as in years past, the joint effort will focus on intense, thorough, and systematic clean up of the entire base.

Easter Sunrise Service/MCBH

Sunday from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. at Fort Hase Beach, here. For more information call Chaplain Daniel Owens at 257-8318.

Easter Sunrise Service/Bellows

Sunday from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. at Bellows Air Forces Base pavilion B. Minister Joshua Dial will begin service at 6:30 a.m. At 7 a.m., a free breakfast buffet will be provided along with free photos with the Easter bunny. An Easter egg hunt will follow at 8:30 a.m. For more information call 259-4112.

Communication Cables Damaged

The storm March 31 caused severe damages to the base's telecommunications cables, which adversely effected service to telephone lines. In next week's Hawaii Marine, our Combat Correspondents will explain what happened to the base's communications and what is being done to correct some of the damages and problems.

Excellence in Federal Government Awards Luncheon

The Honolulu Executive Board is sponsoring the 2006 Excellence in Federal Government Awards Luncheon, May 2, at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, Hawaii Ballroom Contact Daniel Gonzales in Building 216, room 81, 257-8808, prior to April 11 to purchase tickets.

Parade and Concert

There will be "A Salute to Our Troops" Waikiki parade and outdoor concert to salute all Hawaii-based military personnel, including the men and women of the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserves

The Parade will begin at 9:30 a.m. May 6 from Fort DeRussy and continue on to Kalakaua and Monsarrat avenues and end at Kapiolani Park at 11:30 a.m.

The outdoor concert, featuring John Legend, will begin at 12:05 p.m. at Kapiolani Park Bandstand and Main Stage and end at 4:45 p.m.

For additional information, call 836-3351.

Parking Lot Closure

The Base Theater parking lot will be closed until Aug. 23 for repairs and improvements.

For more information, call Base Facilities at 257-2171.

Hawaii Marine Accepts Letters

Letters should be clear and concise. The Hawaii Marine staff reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and length. Comments must be signed with a full name and a telephone number must be provided.

Hawaii Marine also accepts news briefs containing relevant information pertaining to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

All letters and news briefs should be e-mailed to: editor@hawaiimarine.com.

Important Phone Numbers:

On-Base Emergencies	911
Military Police	257-7114
Child Protective Service	832-5300
Fraud, Waste, Abuse & EEO	257-8852
Business Management Hotline	257-3188
Pothole & Streetlight Repair	257-2380
Base Information	449-7110
MCBH Duty Chaplain	257-7700

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E-MAIL: editor@hawaiimarine.com
FAX: 257-1289, Phone: 257-8835

Claims, reimbursements made

Lance Cpl. Edward C. deBree
Combat Correspondent

Marine Corps Base Hawaii will join hundreds of other military installations in implementing the Defense Travel System in early April.

"The Defense Travel System is a paperless temporary travel system to process TAD (temporary assigned duty) online," said Shayan Farazmand, mission systems sector manager, Information and Technical Solutions Division, DTS. "It's similar to travel Web sites like Orbitz and Travelocity, because military personnel have control over what flights they go on; what seats they sit at on the plane; what lodging they stay at when they get there; and where they rent a vehicle from."

In order to access DTS, enlisteds and officers need their common access card, access to a computer and software downloaded from the Web site. From there, the request and orders are routed through their chain of command for approval. Once approved, orders can be printed out and the service

member can take the orders to the airport, where he or she can charge their expenses to a government credit card.

Upon completion of the travel, a voucher is filled out, listing all charges the service member made, which he or she files for reimbursement two to three days later.

The system will reduce the time it takes for service members to get reimbursement for all travel expenses they have made during the period they were on TAD, said Farazmand.

"This system does what the travel office does, but you are in charge of it," said Army Master Sgt. Bruce Carter, DTS fielding team member, Program Manager Office, DTS. "The sooner you get reimbursed, the better. This system cuts down on time – which, if you save time, you save money. This system has saved the government millions of dollars, and it's easy to use for the service members. I have used it before."

Marine Corps Base Hawaii initiated the program in November 2005 and it should now be fully operational on base. Units that will be able to use DTS include

Headquarters Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, Combat Service Support Group 3, Marine Aircraft Group 24, and Marine Corps units stationed aboard Camp Smith.

Carter said that commanders will like the system because it keeps them informed as to wheretheir Marines that are going on TAD, and it will save money in their budget.

According to the DTS Web site, the Defense Travel System was first envisioned in the mid-1990s and first fielded in 2001 at 21 pilot sites. It is now supporting hundreds of thousands of service members and Department of Defense personnel worldwide.

"Marines here are about to get technical, because it's all Web based," said Carter. "It puts them in charge of where they're going and how they're getting there, and it will put them online with the rest of the Department of Defense. They will no longer have to go to the travel office and wait."

For more information on DTS, log on to www.dtstravelcenter.dod.mil.



Cpl. T. J. Kaemmerer

Angela E. Zavala, editor, TIYM Publishing Company, Inc., addresses a crowd during the 2006 TIYM African-American Yearbook reception at the Library of Congress April 6. This is the sixth year the Marine Corps has advertised in the publication, which provides a wide range of resource and referral information about the African American community.

Marines promote diversity

Cpl. T. J. Kaemmerer
Marine Corps Recruiting Command

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than a dozen Marines, including two of the Corps' senior-ranking African-Americans, attended a reception for the release of the 2006 TIYM African American Yearbook at the Library of Congress April 6.

This is the Corps' sixth year advertising in the publication, which provides a wide range of resource and referral information about the African American community.

Also in attendance were representatives from various government agencies, private sector businesses, and members of the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard and members of Congress.

Major Gen. Walter E. Gaskin, commanding general, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, and Maj. Gen. Cornell Wilson, director of Reserve Affairs Division,

Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, were the senior Marines in attendance. Gaskin, the keynote speaker of the evening, told an enthralled audience about the contributions of the first African-American Marines, known as the Montford Point Marines. Because of them, the Marine Corps today benefits greatly from its ethnic diversity. Gaskin is the first African-American to head the Corps' recruiting efforts.

"The Marine Corps came to be where it is today because of the dedication and contributions of those first African-American Marines," said Gaskin. "The Marine Corps is a team, and our strength stems from the diversity of each of our individual Marines."

Government and community leaders understand the value of these yearbooks to their organizations efforts in promoting diversity.

Congressman Charles B. Rangel, D, N.Y., was slated to speak at the event but couldn't attend due to prior commitments. Representing Rangel was Cedric Grant, who voiced the congressman's remarks.

"Diversity is what makes America the great nation it is today," Grant said, on Rangel's behalf. "It is our bedrock and our strength"

The 2006 TIYM African-American Yearbook highlights those experiences, traditions and accomplishments of African-Americans in many walks of life, to include the military. This year, the Marine Corps is featured in a five-page, full-color advertorial that highlights educational and leadership opportunities in the Corps, as well as the accomplishments of several African-American Marines.

According to Angela Zavala, editor, TIYM Publishing Company, Inc., her company has

really grown with the Marines.

"Our Success wouldn't be possible without the support of the Marine Corps," Zavala said.

With a distribution network of 50,000 outlets to include the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, the Department of Defense, U.S. embassies and consulates, schools, the American Council on Education; and the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships, the Marine Corps hopes to further their growth with TIYM Publishing.

"The Marine Corps will continue communicate its message of opportunity and diversity through the African-American Yearbook as a means of reaching influencers in the African-American community," Gaskin said.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of this year's African-American Yearbook, visit www.tiym.com.

Weekend weather outlook

Today



Day — Partly to mostly cloudy skies throughout day. The winds will be easterly at 12 to 15 knots with gust to 23 knots during the day. There will be isolated rain showers during the morning hours.

Night — Partly cloudy skies will prevail throughout the night. The winds will be easterly at 10 to 12 knots with gust to 18 knots.

High — 78
Low — 72

Saturday



Day — Partly cloudy to mostly cloudy skies throughout the day. The winds will be easterly at 10 to 13 knots with gusts to 20 knots. Expect isolated light rain showers before sunrise

Night — Partly cloudy skies will prevail throughout the night. Winds will be easterly at 08 to 12 knots with gusts to 18 knots. Expect few rain showers during the early evening hours.

High — 78
Low — 72

Sunday



Day — Partly cloudy with temporary mostly cloudy conditions throughout the day. The winds will be northeasterly to easterly at 08 to 12 knots with gust to 16 knots. There will be light rain showers during the morning hours.

Night — Partly cloudy skies becoming mostly cloudy overnight. Winds will be easterly at 07 to 10 knots with isolated gust to 15 knots. Expect few rain showers over night.

High — 78
Low — 72



Photos by Lance Cpl. Stephen Kwietniak

Navy Lt. Aric Aghayan, battalion surgeon, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Shawnee, Kan., provides medical attention to an Afghan boy during a recent Medical Civil Affairs Project, or MEDCAP, in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Marines and Sailors from 1/3 are currently deployed from their home base at Marine Corps Base Hawaii to Afghanistan.

1/3 conducts MEDCAP in Afghanistan

Marines and Sailors provide humanitarian aid to nearly 1,000 Afghan villagers and refugees during MEDCAP

Story by Sgt. Joe Lindsay
Combat Correspondents

JALALABAD, Afghanistan — Navy hospital corpsmen from 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, based out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii, recently provided medical checkups to nearly 1,000 Afghan refugees and locals, while elements of the U.S. Army's Civil Affairs team stationed here handed out humanitarian supplies, which included food, clothes, blankets, and other essentials, to the swarms of people who flocked to an aid station set up by coalition forces between two refugee camps in the sprawling town of Jalalabad.

The Medical Civil Affairs Project, or MEDCAP as it is commonly referred to, was a joint coalition forces effort between 1/3's Marines and Sailors, U.S. Air Force airmen, U.S. Army and Afghan National Army soldiers, and Afghan National Police officers, noted 1st Sgt. John Armstead, company first sergeant, Headquarters and Service Company, 1/3.

"The Marines, ANA and ANP provided the security for this important mission, so that 1/3's corpsmen and the Army's civil affairs team could help these people," said Armstead, a native of Canton, Ohio. "It is hard to describe the scene of these refugee camps. There were human feces everywhere, most people had no shoes to speak of, and there was no running water. These people are destitute. If we're not going to help them, who is?"

Sadly, noted Chief Petty Officer Claude English, enlisted senior medical department representative, 1/3, the answer to Armstead's question is probably nobody.

"The majority of these children have most likely never been seen by a doctor before, not even when they were born," said English, a New Orleans native. "The average life expectancy for women over here is 43 years. Many women die in childbirth, because they don't have access to medical facilities. The average life expectancy for men is a little higher, at 47 years. It is a hard, hard life here in Afghanistan."

According to English, the purpose of the MEDCAP was to help the refugees and displaced Afghans in any way possible, with a specific emphasis on treating children.

"We can't cure cancer out here," observed English, "but we're definitely doing everything we can to help them out. These people don't have anything over here and everyday comes down to a matter of survival. By focusing on the children we hope we can help them at a young age so they have a better chance to live a healthy life."

For those who attended the MEDCAP, from 1/3 Commanding Officer Lt. Col. James Bierman down to the Marines on the ground providing security, it was a day many said they would not soon forget.

"The Marines were there to provide security so the corpsmen could do their thing, but we felt like we were a part of it, too," said 1st Lt. Matt Bronson, executive officer, Headquarters and Service Company, 1/3. "Being over here every day makes you realize how much we take for granted back in the states," continued the Barre, Mass., native. "I will never forget seeing the looks of relief on the faces of the parents when their children were receiving medical treatment and they were getting medicine and multi-vitamins for their kids."

"We as a coalition are directly impacting their lives for the better," added Bronson. "It's a good feeling."

Others who took part in the MEDCAP conveyed similar messages regarding the day's events.

"It was great!" said Navy Lt. Aric Aghayan, battalion surgeon, 1/3. "We saw nearly a thousand patients, which exceeded my expectations, but we were prepared for it," continued Aghayan, a native of Shawnee, Kan. "The whole operation went smoothly, and we got a chance to help a lot of people who really needed it."

"This is what being a corpsman is all about," added Petty Officer 1st Class Tim Gorman, leading petty officer, 1/3, from Tucson, Ariz. "It was a long day, but I couldn't think of a better way to spend it."

According to Sgt. Maj. Michael Berg, battalion sergeant major, 1/3, and a native of Plymouth, N.H., the MEDCAP was in keeping with 1/3's philosophy of "No better friend; no worse enemy."

"We are here in Afghanistan to root out the enemy insurgents, but we are also here to help the local Afghan people in other ways as well," said Berg, who attended the MEDCAP with Bierman.

"The Afghan children are what it is all about. We want them to have a better future, to live in freedom, and to make sure they are healthy and have a chance in life. Seeing the smiles on the faces of the children and their parents just hits home why we are here – to help the people of Afghanistan."



Navy Lt. Aric Aghayan, battalion surgeon, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Shawnee, Kan., provides medical attention to an Afghan man during a recent Medical Civil Affairs Project, or MEDCAP, in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.



The injured foot of an Afghan boy is treated by Navy Lt. Aric Aghayan, battalion surgeon, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, who was in Jalalabad Afghanistan as part of a recent Medical Civil Affairs Project, or MEDCAP, aimed at providing medical check-ups and humanitarian aid to Afghan refugees and displaced persons.

High-performance fabrics pose burn threat

Lance Cpl. Stephen Holt
1st Marine Logistics Group

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq — According to Marine Corps commanders in Iraq, the wearing synthetic athletic clothing containing polyester and nylon has been prohibited while conducting operations from forward operating bases and camps.

The ban on popular clothing from companies like Under Armour, CoolMax and Nike comes in the wake of concerns that a substantial burn risk is associated with wearing clothing made with these synthetic materials.

When exposed to extreme heat and flames, clothing containing some synthetic materials like polyester will melt and can fuse to the skin. This essentially creates a second skin and can lead to horrific, disfiguring burns, said Navy Capt. Lynn E. Welling, the 1st Marine Logistics Group head surgeon.

Whether on foot patrol or conducting a supply convoy while riding in an armored truck, everyone is at risk to such injuries while outside the wire.

Burns can kill you and they're horribly disfiguring. If you're throwing a melted synthetic material on top of a



Lance Cpl. Stephen Holt

A hard crust (shown here) is the result of a burn test conducted by Navy Capt. Lynn E. Welling, the 1st Marine Logistics Group's surgeon. The test on the material was done in an effort to study how polyester materials found in high-performance wicking material react to fire.

burn, you will have a bad burn with plastic melted into your skin, and that's not how you want to go home to your family, said Welling.

According to Tension Technology International, a company that specializes in synthetic fibers, most man-made fabrics, such as nylon,

acrylic or polyester will melt when ignited and produce a hot, sticky, melted substance causing extremely severe burns.

For these reasons, Marines have been limited to wearing clothing made with these materials only while on the relatively safe forward operat-

ing bases and camps where encounters with fires and explosions are relatively low.

The popularity of these products has risen in the past few years and has started being sold at military clothing stores. Some companies have come out with product lines specifically catering to mili-

tary needs. This makes polyester clothing readily available to service members, said Welling.

The high-performance fabrics work by pulling perspiration away from the body to the outside of the garment instead of absorbing moisture like most cotton clothing.

The Under Armour company, a favorite among many service members here, advertises that the fabric used to make their garments will wick perspiration from the skin to the outer layer of the clothing allowing the person wearing it to remain cool and dry in any condition or climate.

While these qualities have been a main reason for Marines to stock up on these items, the melting side effect can be a fatal drawback, said Welling.

This point was driven home recently at a military medical facility located at Camp Ramadi, a U.S. military base on the outskirts of the city of Ramadi, arguably one of the most dangerous cities in Iraq.

"We had a Marine with significant burn injuries covering around 70 percent of his body," said Cmdr. Joseph F. Rappold, the officer-in-charge of the medical unit at the base.

The Marine was injured when the armored vehicle he was riding in struck an improvised explosive device, or IED, causing his polyester shirt to melt to his skin. Even though he was wearing his protective vest, Navy doctors still had to cut the melted undergarment from his torso.

See BURN, A-5

Marines swap rank during NCO week

Cpl. Megan L. Stiner
Combat Correspondent

The Combat Assault Company office displayed a rare image during noncommissioned officer's week, April 3 to 7. Instead of the normal one staff NCO or officer occupying a room during working hours, there were two Marines or Sailors.

Throughout the various offices in the company, the image remained the same. In nearly every scenario, one of two individual's faces was adorned with a smile as he observed the other whose furrowed brow remained in place while shuffling papers and answering the phone.

Where the observant individual's collar displayed two similar chevrons, the other's exhibited a different look. On the left was a sergeant's or corporal's chevron, and on the right was a different insignia atop a red patch.

For one week, Marines participated in NCO week where they were given the opportunity to swap rank and responsibilities with staff NCOs and officers in their company.

"I was very interested when I first heard of the concept for NCO week," explained Sgt. Robert S. McMillian, an amphibious assault vehicle Marine who assumed the responsibilities of 1st Sgt. Anthony Sammartino, company first sergeant, H&S Company, during the week. "I plan on making the Marine Corps a career, so it gave me the opportunity to see what the higher-ranking Marines do on a day-to-day basis. It definitely helped to give me an idea of what I can expect in later years and determine what route to take."

According to McMillian, a native of Miami, Okla., a lot of Marines may think that their staff NCOs and officers have easy jobs which afford them a lot of free time. However, after experiencing the tasks and duties of his first sergeant, he has a totally different perspective of the workload and a newfound respect for the job title.

"This job is quite a bit too demanding," said the 31-year-old. "There is all the routine work and responsibilities, but then there are also a lot of extra tasks that arise throughout each day."

According to Sammartino, who was the brains behind the weeklong event here, he was put through the exact same thing when he was a corporal, which was when the idea originated.

"I am leaving the unit soon, and I wanted to do one last big event for the Marines before I took off," he explained. "It was a good experience for me, and



Cpl. Megan L. Stiner

Sgt. Robert S. McMillian, acting first sergeant, Combat Assault Company, 3rd Marine Regiment, here, concentrates while looking over paperwork in the first sergeant's office. During noncommissioned officer's week, April 3 to 7, the NCOs of CAC took on the duties and responsibilities of the staff NCOs and officers of their company in an effort to give them a better idea of the higher-ranking Marine's and Sailor's responsibilities and daily workload.

I thought they would benefit from it as well."

McMillian, an eight-year veteran, said he thinks it is a good event for any unit or group of Marines to go through.

"Before NCO week, the only perspective of the staff NCO and officers' jobs was from an outside view," he explained. "Now I know they don't have extra time and less work. I see the process they go through each day and how demanding it really is for them."

Sammartino said some Marines might complain because it takes a while for things that need to get done to get downrange. One of the benefits of job

responsibilities is getting to see what it takes for things to happen and why, at times, it seems to take so long.

"You always hear Marines say they are waiting for word," he said. "By participating in NCO week, they get a chance to see where the word comes from, what changes occur as it gets pushed down each

level of the chain of command, and why the changes and, at times, delays occur. It gives them a better perspective as to why some things happen and how decisions and events are decided and ultimately put into action."

Each day of the week brought a new responsibility to the table for the NCOs. Monday was job assignments, which were decided on by choosing from a hat. Tuesday was a day for the NCOs to shadow the Marine whose job they would be assuming. Wednesday the NCOs took control of the responsibilities with a minor amount of assistance from the staff NCOs and officers. Thursday they took full reign of their new billet. Friday the staff NCOs and officers assumed their NCOs' billets, and the event was wrapped up.

According to McMillian, one negative aspect of the experience is the fact that it is only one week long.

Although Marines get a taste of their new job billet, they don't get the whole experience because of the time constraint.

"There is only one day for turnover, and then we just kinda got thrown into the job," he said. "If I had more time to prepare, then I probably wouldn't be so overwhelmed."

In a similar manner, Cpl. Rob E. Minnish, acting commanding officer, expressed his experience as being confusing, but in a little different way.

"We did get thrown into a lot of meetings and odd situations," said the Dayton, Ohio native. "But, the hardest part for me was trying to figure out the long acronyms as the colonel spoke during meetings. It was nice not having anyone telling me what to do, but when it came to the business of being the CO, I realized I have a lot to learn."

Aside from the difficulties of their newfound responsibilities, both McMillian and Minnish agreed the week was very informative and beneficial for them and their fellow Marines and Sailors.

"I hope other units take this concept and apply it to their Marines and Sailors," said McMillian.

"It taught me a lot, and I think it could benefit any Marine or Sailor to see what the individuals above them in the chain of command are responsible for on a daily basis."

BURN, from A-4

His injuries would not have been as severe, had he not been wearing a polyester shirt, said Rappold.

Burns have become a common injury in Iraq as the enemy continues to employ IEDs and roadside bombs.

Currently, such hidden explosives are the number-one killer of service members in Iraq, said Welling.

For years, service members with jobs that put them at a high risk of flame exposure, such as pilots and explosive ordnance disposal personnel, were kept from wearing polyester materials because of the extra burn threat. Now, with so many encounters with IED explosions, the Marines are extending this ban to everyone going outside the wire.

As the summer months in Iraq get closer, temperatures during some days are expected hover around 130 degrees Fahrenheit. With blistering temperatures like these, many will be wearing the moisture wicking, quick-drying clothing in an attempt to beat the heat and stay cool.

“I understand it gets to be 150 degrees in a turret during the summertime. My goal is not to make it more uncomfortable or harder on the service members. My job is to make sure that when they hit an IED and are engulfed in flames, they have the best protection possible and the least risk of something (going wrong) that could have been prevented,” said Welling.

A concern among commanders is that service members will downplay the problem of wearing wicking materials in combat settings, because they think their body armor or uniforms will protect them.

The camouflage utility uniforms are designed to turn to ash and blow away after the material is burned, but the burn hazard is still present, said Welling, who recommends wearing 100 percent cotton clothing while on missions.

So far, Marines have been responding well to the new regulations.

“The policy is good, because it’s designed for safety and is about keeping Marines in the fight,” said Cpl. Jason Lichtefeld, a military policeman with the 1st MLG, who plans to make sure his Marines comply with the new rules.

Even Marines who never venture off their base should be aware of the risks associated with wearing the wicking fabrics.

Recently, there was a case where a Marine’s high-performance undershirt started smoking when he was shocked by an electrical current. Fortunately, it didn’t catch on fire or melt, but the potential was there, said Welling.

When working in a low-risk environment where exposure to flames or intense heat is minimal, the high-performance apparel can be an optimal option for staying cool in the Iraq heat.

“We’ve got a great piece of gear, but when you put it in the wrong environment, it could cause more problems than its worth,” said Welling.

The directive is straight forward and simple.

“The goal is not to bubble wrap the warrior going outside the gate,” said Welling.

“The idea is to minimize the (hazards) we have control over.”

Environmental Compliance and Protection Department

MCBH Environmental Compliance and Protection Department would like to remind residents, military and civilians working on base, about solid-waste disposal procedures.

“Many people are unaware of the procedures of how to dispose of bulky items and hazardous waste here on base and in the community. We would like to get the word out to our customers,” said Paulette Ujimori, Solid Waste Compliance manager of the EC&PD. “Due to restrictions with our landfill permit we can’t accept hazardous wastes or bulky items, but people new to our base or the island sometimes don’t know what to do with them.”

Hazardous waste may include paints, solvents, batteries, fluorescent lamps, antifreeze, used oil, propane tanks, solvents, ammunition, etc. On MCBH, there are two types of hazardous waste: Household hazardous waste and industrial hazardous waste.

Residents living in base housing generates household hazardous waste. Base housing residents may bring their usable, unwanted hazardous products, such as paints, household cleaners, motor oils and propane tanks to the “Reuse Room” at the Self-Help Store in Building 1505 on the corner of Cushman and Lawrence roads. They’ll be able to swap or pick up products, at no cost, for use in their residence. Household hazardous waste (products no longer usable), generated from base housing, should be discarded according to the MCBH Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Chart. Residents living off base may take their household hazardous waste to one of the city’s Drop-Off Convenience Centers (propane cylinders must be empty). More information on the City’s Convenience Centers may be found at www.opala.org, or by calling the City & County of Honolulu at 692-5411.

MCBH personnel, military and civilians, engaging in daily maintenance and repair operations, generate industrial waste. All industrial hazardous waste, with the exception of ammunition, must be turned in to the Base Hazardous Waste Accumulation Site via work center’s authorized Satellite Accumulation Site. Federal and state governments have established strict regulations for the disposal of industrial hazardous waste. Noncompliance of these regulations can result in potential fines for MCBH. All hazardous waste must be turned in to the work center’s SAS. The Hazardous Material and Hazardous Waste Coordinator for each work center’s SAS is fully trained in accumulation and turn-in procedures. “The State Department of Health can fine us for improper disposal of hazardous wastes,” said Ujimori. “For example, the fine for improper disposal of a single lead acid battery can be up to \$10,000.”

Ammunition is also considered a hazardous waste and should not be removed from the work areas. Ammunition includes blank and live rounds and any other type of explosive material that may present a potential explosive hazard. If ammunition is accidentally removed from the work area, it should be returned to amnesty bins set up at the Range and the 3rd



File Photo

A trash truck dumps its load in a landfill aboard K-Bay. This photo serves as a reminder from the Environmental Compliance and Protection Department, here, to dispose of solid waste properly.

Marines Armory, Building 4053, located off Mokapu Road across the street from McDonalds. The bins are set up for individuals to turn in rounds that they may have accidentally taken away from work areas, with no questions asked, and without threat of disciplinary action on the individual turning in the rounds. Ammunition can also be turned in to any Regiment Officer of the Day. If you encounter any ammunition or ordnance that you are unsure of, contact the Provost Marshal’s Office at 257-2123.

Anything that may be questionable should not be touched by untrained individuals or improperly disposed of in the trash. At no time should ammunition be disposed of in household trash or dumpsters. Ammunition that enters the solid waste stream has the potential to injure refuse collection and disposal workers.

Bulky items also pose a problem with solid waste disposal, because they are not easily compacted or land-filled. Unusable bulky items are picked up from base housing areas biweekly as part of regular trash pickup. For bulky item pick up off base, the city and county of Honolulu provides bulky item pick up service and should be providing free, regularly scheduled pick up in all areas, beginning in February 2006. (Currently, some areas require residents to call to schedule a pick up).

For more information regarding bulky item pick up off base, visit the city’s Web site at www.opala.org. The base thrift shop, located at Third Street will accept any usable furniture during work hours. These items should

not be left outside of the Thrift Shop after hours, because rain may damage the items, making them unusable and resalable. For more information, contact the Thrift Shop at 254-0841. Government-generated bulky items should be brought to the Recycling Center for proper disposal.

“We would also like to remind our units and tenants on base that recyclables must be taken to the recycle center located at Building 132 at the intersection of First and D streets. Recyclables, hazardous wastes, ammunition and bulky items are not allowed in base dumpsters,” Ujimori added. “The refuse driver does inspect dumpsters prior to pick up, if any of these materials are found in a dumpster, facilities, Motor Transportation Division will tag the dumpster and notify the unit to remove any of these items prior to the dumpster being picked up. Units should then contact Motor-T at 216-6242 to notify them that the dumpster has been cleaned and is ready for pick up.

Housing residents also need to be reminded to follow proper solid-waste disposal procedures as well. While no one inspects their trash, the same rules apply to them when it comes to disposal of their solid waste.”

More information on base regulations for solid-waste disposal can be found in Chapter 3 of Base Order 5500.15B on <http://www.mcbh.usmc.mil/g1/adjutant/pubs/5000/BaseO%20P5500.15B.doc> and on the Environmental Compliance and Protection Department’s Web site at <http://www.mcbh.usmc.mil/g4/environ/g4edir.htm>.

WHEN YOU CAN'T BREATHE, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS®

For information about lung disease such as asthma, tuberculosis, and emphysema, contact your local Lung Association

 AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION.



Photo by Sgt. Joe Lindsay

First Lt. Carl DeSantis, platoon commander, Distributed Operations Platoon, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, from Reno, Nev., hands a blanket to a village elder during a humanitarian mission to the hamlet of Rechah Lam in the Kunar Province of eastern Afghanistan earlier this year.

LABOR, from A-1

Washington, where he worked as a mechanical inspector. Early in the day, he mentioned his premonition to a coworker who tried to reassure him. But he was unconvinced. After work, he found reasons not to go home. He went to the gym. He ran errands. At 11 p.m., Greg Medina finally returned home. Relieved not to have received dreaded news about Brian, he prepared to settle into bed for the night. At 11:45 p.m. came the knock on the door.

As a junior Marine stationed at Kanhoe Bay, Hawaii, Brian Medina repeatedly requested orders to Iraq, essentially fighting his way onto deployment. According to Medina, his son's enthusiasm earned him a reputation among his peers. Before deploying from Okinawa, he reportedly chastised a number of Marines in his unit for bemoaning their mission to Iraq.

"He essentially told them to pack their gear or go home. He told them, 'We're Marines and this is what we do,'" Medina recalled a later account from one of Brian's squad members. Once in Iraq, Brian continued to lead from the front. The citation for his posthumous Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal with combat distinguishing device states he "consistently performed his duties as a rifleman in an exemplary and highly professional manner ... at a greater risk to his own life, he enthusiastically assumed point-man duties for his squad and occasionally his platoon."

It was on point that Brian

was fatally wounded Nov. 12, 2004, in the courtyard of a home in Fallujah two months after landing in country.

After clearing a number of houses in a search and attack mission near the company command post, Medina and fellow squad member Lance Cpl. David Branning came upon a locked gate. The two Marines bravely kicked open the gate and led their fire team inside. Medina entered first and broke left followed by Branning who went right. Both were immediately ambushed with a barrage of armor-piercing machine-gun fire. Branning died on the scene and Brian later died enroute to a field hospital.

Since that day, Medina has come to understand Brian's life in the Corps as best he can, developing relationships with his son's friends to come to terms with his own loss and to keep the memory of Brian close.

He has been comforted by Brian's comrades, many of who he traveled to meet in Hawaii after the unit's rotation home. Like adopted sons, he listens to their war stories, stories he will never hear from Brian, and he reassures them that they did everything they could for his son. He is grateful for the love they shared for Brian and irrefutably demonstrated through their own acts of heroism and sacrifice.

Cpl. Andrew Ethridge attended Brian's funeral on crutches and wept over his casket as Greg Medina wrapped an arm around his shoulders and comforted him. Andrew was shot in the leg while running

to Brian's aid as he lay dying in the courtyard. Andrew still blames himself for not being able to save his friend's life. Cpl. Alexis Ayala, Brian's fire team leader, was decorated, in part, for retrieving Branning's body, helping to carry Brian to safety, and returning to the fire-swept courtyard a third time for a medical bag so a corpsman could continue to try to save Brian.

There is a strong military tradition in the Medina family. Greg Medina served 20 years as a Navy SeaBee, his brother retired from the Air Force as a lieutenant colonel, and his father was a captain in the Army.

"I'm grateful it wasn't drugs that killed him, or a drive-by, or a drunk driver," Medina said. "He was killed doing something he truly believed in. The guys believed in what they were doing, and he believed he was making a difference."

The spring following Brian's death, Greg Medina's employer, Jacobs Facilities, offered him a mechanical inspector position at the future site of the National Museum of the Marine Corps. He jumped at the opportunity.

He said he took the job not to serve the Marine Corps or even Brian, but for himself.

"This keeps Brian alive for me. So it's not for Brian, it's for me," Medina said. "I always have a place to go, south or north. I can go to Arlington or I can come here. This is close for me. I can spend a lot of time here."

When he visits Arlington, Medina notices how the older graves lack the fresh flowers

DO, from A-1

a good concept on paper, but that it actually works in practice."

Other Marines in the Distributed Operations Platoon seemed to echo Lytle's sentiments.

"There is pressure, because the Marine Corps has invested a lot of time and resources training us," said Cpl. Alexis Ayala, 1st Squad Leader, Distributed Operations Platoon, 1/3. "The whole Marine Corps is watching us, and it is up to us to set the standard."

"The Lava Dogs in the DO Platoon have risen to the challenge, and we are doing good things out here," continued Ayala, a native of Queens, N.Y., by way of Morgantown, N.C. "We are the first DO Platoon in history. We are the founding fathers and all of us are very proud of that."

One reason Lytle said he believes Distributed Operations has a bright future in the Marine Corps is because it is based

on the Marine Corps philosophy of empowering small-unit leaders.

"The Marine Corps has always trusted its small-unit leaders," said Lytle. "That's all were doing in DO – except were just trusting them a whole lot more."

Lytle's statement seemed to be consistent with the MCWFL concept for Distributed Operation release, which states: "Continuing the trend toward decentralization of authority has been a hallmark of the Marine Corps combat development, this concept posits the distribution of decision-making authority across a wide number of junior leaders who are directly engaged in the fight. By moving authority downward, we will dramatically increase the speed of command."

According to Lytle, the Distributed Operations Platoon is not meant to supplant traditional infantry platoons, but rather to compliment them.

"We're just another asset for the command to utilize," said Lytle. "A deadly asset."



Courtesy of Greg Medina

Lance Cpl. Brian Medina, an infantryman, B Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, was killed in Iraq in 2004.

found on the more recent plots.

"On all those new graves, there is always something fresh there," Medina said. "I just don't want to ever have Brian's site left bare. To do that is to forget."

The permanence of the National Museum of the Marine Corps will never let

Medina forget. But just to be sure, other safeguards are in place, too. Medina keeps a disk of photographs documenting Brian's Marine Corps service: Early pictures of Brian with perfect, post-boot camp posture to pictures of Brian posing with his squad members in Iraq. One photo taken shortly after he killed a man for the first

time, shows Brian sitting against a wall in combat gear looking despondent. A later photo from another angle shows Brian unmoved, perhaps still considering the gravity of his earlier combat action.

Medina has never been able to explain the sudden pain he felt when Brian was killed in Iraq, but he believes he has received another message through a more recent dream.

Medina is on a sailboat with his son at the helm. and is surprised to see his son manning the rudder with ease.

"Brian, where did you learn to sail?" he asked.

Brian does not answer but gives his dad a confident smile.

Suddenly, Medina is in the water behind the sailboat as his son drives the sailboat, continuing to cut through the waves toward the horizon.

"Where are you going?" Medina asked aloud, the boat now out of earshot.

When he woke, Mendina said he understood.

"He's in a better place," said Medina of his son.

"He is going on with his journey."



Becka Nielson and her two-year-old son Van (left) sit with Tanja Murdock and her daughter Brianna, 14 months, in the crowd during the Key Volunteer ceremony. There are more than 175 key volunteers distributed among the various units here.

KEY, from A-1

of Marine Corps families.

“The KVs can relate to the families and spouses of the unit better than could a uniformed volunteer, because they themselves are spouses and mothers,” said Baker. She added that the Key Volunteers’ primary duties include: Welcoming new families to the units and providing them information about base resources, keeping them updated when the unit is deployed; organizing “Family Days” and welcome home parties; and providing general family readiness assistance to unit commanding officers.

Each of the units on base has their own group of Key Volunteers who were honored. Brenda Cooklin, Key Volunteer, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, said it serves as a good support group for spouses with deployed husbands.

“It’s a really good link for the wives to let them know what is happening,” said Cooklin, the spouse of Sgt. Nick Cooklin, platoon sergeant, Lima Company, 3/3.

Tanya Murdock, Key Volunteer, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, has been doing this for one and a half years and agreed it is a good support system.

“We just get together and talk about what’s going on while they’re (husbands) on a combat deploy-

ment,” said Murdock. Her spouse is Staff Sgt. Jacob Murdock, platoon sergeant, Alpha Company, 1/3.

Other Key Volunteers were there to tell their thoughts about the program.

“It’s a good way to make friends during activities,” chimed in Murdock’s friend Becka Nielson, who met meet Murdock through the network.

Commanding General Marine Corps Base Hawaii Brig. Gen. Steven A. Hummer, spoke at the ceremony, emphasizing the Key Volunteer’s mission is crucial to mission readiness and even called it a “combat multiplier.”

Lieutenant Col. Rob Scott, executive officer, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, was present at the ceremony with his wife Gabriella, a Key Volunteer for the unit, and their three children.

Scott said he also believes the network is vital to the mission.

“We couldn’t have accomplished what we did without them,” said Scott, referring to how much the network helped him and his unit through their last two deployments.

During the ceremony, each Key Volunteer on the base was honored for his or her contributions.

“We wanted to appreciate all of the key volunteers, not just one or two,” said Baker. “Without KVs to help out, and offer guidance, and support to the



Above: Key Volunteers from 1st Battallion, 3rd Marine Regiment are presented with gifts for the work they have done for the Key Volunteer Network. Key Volunteers serve as a link between families and the command of their spouses' unit.



Left: Kids stayed busy during the Key Volunteer Appreciation celebration and played in two "Bouncy Houses" set up by volunteers.

families of the unit, there would be a lot more unhappy families and unhappy service members.”

Baker added it is just as important for the deployed Marine as it is for the Marine’s family back at home.

“If a Marine knows his family is OK, he can stay focused on the task at hand and accomplish the mission,”

said Baker.

Following the ceremony, the guests enjoyed music provided by the Marine Corps Forces Pacific party band and refreshments provided by the event’s sponsor, TriWest. TriWest also presented Marine Corps Family Building with a \$5,000 check to strengthen the program.

Military children also came out with their parents to play in two “Bouncy Houses” that were set up by volunteers working the event.

For more information on becoming a Key Volunteer, contact the unit Key Volunteer coordinator, family readiness officer or commanding officer and ask about Key Volunteer training opportunities.